

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNIT 17 (13 & 14) - WASATCH MOUNTAINS

Boundary Description

Salt Lake, Summit, Wasatch, Duchesne, Carbon, Utah counties - Boundary begins at the junction of Interstate 15 and Interstate 80 in Salt Lake City, then east on I-80 to Highway US-40; south on US-40 to Highway SR-32; east on SR-32 to Highway SR-35; southeast on SR-35 to Highway SR-87; south on SR-87 to Duchesne and Highway US-191; south on US-191 to Highway US-6; northeast on US-6 to I-15; north on I-15 to I-80 in Salt Lake City.

Old deer herd units 13 - Currant Creek and 14 - Avintaquin are now contained with the large Wasatch Mountains Wildlife Management Unit 17. The old deer herd unit boundary descriptions and unit descriptions have been retained below. Old trend study numbers are found in parentheses next to the new unit 17 study numbers on the discussion page for each trend study.

OLD DEER HERD UNIT 13 - CURRANT CREEK

Boundary Description

Duchesne and Wasatch counties - Boundary begins at Duchesne; then north on Highway SR-87 to Highway SR-35; northwesterly on SR-35 to Wolf Creek Pass and the Provo River-Duchesne River drainage divide; south along this drainage divide to Heber Mountain and the Strawberry River-Daniels Canyon drainage divide; south along this divide to Highway US-40; east on US-40 to the Soldier creek Dam road; south on this road to the Strawberry River; east along this river to Duchesne and the beginning point.

Unit Description

The Currant Creek portion of unit 17 encompasses an area of almost 320,000 acres. Winter range is estimated to be 117,500 acres, with the majority (84%) being divided almost equally between state and private lands. The summer range is a little over 200,000 acres, with 62% of it being on U.S. Forest Service lands. The remainder of the summer range is divided between state (25%) and private lands (13%).

Winter range is the critical habitat factor on this unit. All trend studies sample winter range sites. The winter range extends in a virtually solid block north from the Strawberry River to a maximum elevation of about 8,000 to 8,700 feet in the Duchesne River, Red Creek and Currant Creek drainages. At lower elevations, vegetation is primarily pinyon-juniper. At higher elevations, sagebrush-grass and mountain brush communities are more prevalent. See Huff and Coles (1966) and Olsen (1975) for a more complete description.

Management Objectives

The current objective for the Currant Creek portion of unit 17 is to achieve a target winter herd size of 12,000 deer and 1,200 elk. A herd composition of 15 bucks to 100 does will be maintained, with 30% of the bucks being 3-point or better. The desired herd composition for elk is to attain a bull to cow ratio of 8 bulls to 100 cows with 4 of the bulls being 2 ½ years of age or older.

Trend Study Description

Six trend studies were established in 1982 and reread in 1988, 1995 and 2000. These include: Blacktail Ridge (17-1), Grey Wolf Mountain (17-2), Lower Santaquin Draw (17-3), Santaquins Cabin (17-4), Cutoff (17-5) and Two Bar Ranch (17-6). The road to the Blacktail Ridge was impassible to trucks in 2000 so the site was not reread.

OLD DEER HERD UNIT - 14 - AVINTAQUIN

Boundary Description

Duchesne, Utah and Wasatch counties - Boundary begins at Duchesne and Highway US-191; then southerly on US-191 to the Reservation Ridge road; westerly and northerly on this road to Big Beaver Springs road; northerly on this road to Big Beaver Springs and Beaver Canyon; northeasterly along this canyon to the Strawberry River; easterly along this river to Duchesne and beginning point (excluding all Ute Tribal lands within this boundary).

Unit Description

The Avintaquin portion of unit 17 contains approximately 97,361 acres of summer range, 96% of which is administered by the Forest Service (Evans 1995). The other 4% is privately owned. Winter range acreage totals about 141,513 acres, where 47% is on Ute Tribal lands and 26% is on private lands. The State of Utah administers an additional 18%.

The principal limiting factor on this portion of the unit is mostly the condition and productivity of the winter range. Winter range extends as high as 8,500 feet in elevation during severe winters. The canyon bottoms of the Strawberry River and its tributaries are very important. The dominant vegetative type on the winter range is pinyon-juniper woodland. There are other areas smaller in size that also play an important role for usefulness as winter range. Most notably, they are pinyon-juniper chainings and sagebrush-grass areas. See Coles and Pederson (1967) and Giunta (1979) for a more detailed description of habitat.

Unit Management Objectives

The current big game management objectives for the Avintaquin portion of unit 17 are to achieve target winter deer and elk herd sizes of 3,000 and 1,000 animals respectively. The herd composition for deer is to maintain a buck to doe ratio of 15:100 with 30% of the bucks being 3-point or better. The elk herd composition objective is to achieve a minimum bull to cow ratio of 8:100 with at least 4 of those bulls being 2 ½ years of age or older.

Trend Study Description

On the Avintaquin portion of unit 17, three range trend studies were established on DWR land 1 on private land and 1 on the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. There is little federally-owned winter range and the majority remains under private ownership or on the Indian Reservation. All study sites sample deer winter range. Two sites sample pinyon-juniper chainings, 1 samples an open pinyon-juniper woodland and 2 sites are placed on higher elevation mountain brush winter ranges. This area is not ranked as a priority for winter range acquisition. All sites were originally established in 1982 and reread in 1988 and 1995. All sites except for Sam's Canyon (17-9) were reread in 2000. The road to Sam's Canyon, on Ute Indian land was impassible in 2000.

SUMMARY

DEER HERD UNIT - 17 (13 & 14) - WASATCH MOUNTAINS

The portion of Wildlife Management Unit 17 read in 2000 contains the old deer herd units 13 - Currant Creek and 14 - Avintaquin. There are a total of 12 trend studies, 6 from the Currant Creek portion and 5 from the Avintaquin. One trend study was established at Emma Park which is on the south end of Unit 17 just north of U.S.-6. All trend studies in the Currant Creek and Avintaquin units were established in 1982 and reread in 1988, 1995 and 2000. In 2000, two studies, Blacktail Ridge (17-48) and Sam's Canyon (17-56) were not read because access roads were impassible for trucks.

The Currant Creek trend studies read in 2000 sample winter ranges, 4 Wyoming big sagebrush sites at Grey Wolf Mountain (17-49), Lower Santaquin Draw (17-50), Santaquin's Cabin (17-51) and Two Bar Ranch (17-53) and one mountain big sagebrush area at Cutoff (17-52). Browse trends are stable on all sites. Herbaceous trends are slightly down at Grey Wolf Mountain, Santaquin's Cabin and Cutoff.

The Avintaquin trend studies read in 2000 sample 4 winter range sites. One trend study samples a pinyon-juniper site at Peatross Ranch (17-54). There are two trend studies on pinyon-juniper chainings at Skitzzy Canyon (17-57) and Buck Knoll (17-58) and one study on a mountain brush site at Lower Horse Ridge (17-55). Browse trends are stable on all sites except for Skitzzy Canyon which displays a slightly upward browse trend. Browse are still in low numbers on this chaining but they are increasing. Herbaceous trends are stable at Peatross Ranch and Skitzzy Canyon but slightly down at Lower Horse Ridge and down at Buck Knoll.

TREND SUMMARY

	Category	1982	1988	1995	2000
Blacktail Ridge 17-48	soil	est	5	3	NR
	browse	est	1	4	NR
	herbaceous understory	est	5	2	NR
Grey Wolf Mountain 17-49	soil	est	3	3	4
	browse	est	5	3	3
	herbaceous understory	est	4	4	2
Lower Santaquin Draw 17-50	soil	est	3	4	3
	browse	est	3	4	3
	herbaceous understory	est	5	4	3
Santaquin's Cabin 17-51	soil	est	2	4	3
	browse	est	2	3	3
	herbaceous understory	est	3	4	2
Cutoff 17-52	soil	est	3	4	3
	browse	est	2	3	3
	herbaceous understory	est	4	4	2

(1) = down, (2) = slightly down, (3) = stable, (4) = slightly up, (5) = up
 est = site established, NA = data not available, NR = site not read

	Category	1982	1988	1995	2000
Two Bar Ranch 17-53	soil	est	1	5	2
	browse	est	5	3	3
	herbaceous understory	est	3	4	3
Peatross Ranch 17-54	soil	est	2	4	3
	browse	est	4	3	3
	herbaceous understory	est	4	1	3
Lower Horse Ridge 17-55	soil	est	4	3	3
	browse	est	5	3	3
	herbaceous understory	est	5	3	2
Sam's Canyon 17-56	soil	est	3	3	NR
	browse	est	3	5	NR
	herbaceous understory	est	3	3	NR
Skitzy Canyon 17-57	soil	est	2	4	3
	browse	est	4	4	4
	herbaceous understory	est	4	3	3
Buck Knoll 17-58	soil	est	3	3	2
	browse	est	4	3	3
	herbaceous understory	est	4	3	1
Emma Park 17-59	soil			est	3
	browse			est	3
	herbaceous understory			est	4

(1) = down, (2) = slightly down, (3) = stable, (4) = slightly up, (5) = up
 est = site established, NA = data not available, NR = site not read